

Memorandum

To: Iowa Council on Homelessness Executive Committee
From: Amber Lewis, Homeless Programs Coordinator
Date: February 20, 2015
Re: Memo Regarding IFA Administrative Support to the Council

Purpose:

This memo is for the purpose of clarifying and proposing a future framework for administrative support that IFA provides for council and committee meetings of the Iowa Council on Homelessness.

Background:

Iowa Code 16.2D establishes the Iowa Council on Homelessness and provides the governing framework. Item 7 states the following: “The Iowa finance authority shall provide staff assistance and administrative support to the council.”

The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) is pleased to fulfill this duty. It complements IFA’s role in managing federal and state homeless assistance grant programs, and more generally, it is in keeping with IFA’s role of advancing affordable housing opportunities in Iowa.

IFA strives to remain current on the changing needs of the council, and to adapt support as necessary. As a formally structured government body, the council is required to follow Iowa open meetings laws. Beyond the minimum requirements, IFA also strives to provide support that is transparent and inclusive to the public and interested stakeholders.

We believe we’ve identified some areas where IFA is currently providing support that isn’t necessary to meet open meetings requirements, nor helpful for committees in advancing their work. For example, some meetings are more discussion-based in nature, and less about taking formal action to bring to the council. Additionally, some committees have membership that is informally organized, and it isn’t clear who is actually an official voting member. Without an accurate count of official members, it’s impossible to determine quorum, and therefore impossible to proceed with an official meeting.

To resolve these issues and allow for more informal committees to continue with their work without the burden of following the same requirements as the more formal committees, IFA is proposing the framework below for future committee support.

Proposed Framework:

- 1) IFA will continue to provide formal support for meetings of the full Iowa Council on Homelessness.
- 2) The Executive and Nominating Committees are formally structured in the Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code. IFA will continue to provide formal support for meetings of these committees.
- 3) Other than the Executive and Nominating Committees, the ICH committees are advisory bodies to the council, that don't set official policies on their own.
- 4) IFA recommends that we continue to provide formal meeting support for the Continuum of Care Committee, given its role in funding recommendations for the CoC Program. (This also means we need a very clear list of official voting committee members.)
- 5) Support for other committees will change slightly:
 - a. IFA will still post agendas, meeting resources and materials, and minutes, to the extent that such items are available, on the website.
 - b. If other committee meetings are held in-person at a location other than IFA, IFA may or may not attend. IFA will develop a form and provide guidance to committee chairs on key items to record for taking informal minutes. (Chairs may ask a volunteer to help.)
 - c. Agendas for such meetings will note at the top that the meeting is for an advisory group, and agendas/informal minutes will be provided as much as possible in the interest of transparency.
 - d. Advisory Committees may still bring items to the full council for consideration. Because meetings of these committees may have taken place "unofficially," such items would be brought to the council in the same way as if an individual council member made a particular motion for the council to consider (which a member could do at any time). Such items would then need a "second" to proceed for a full council vote.
- 6) The Governance Charter of the council should be updated to reflect these changes.

Next Steps:

Before formalizing this proposed policy, IFA is interested in the feedback, additional suggestions, and questions of the Executive Committee of the Iowa Council on Homelessness.